THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF COMMUNICATIONS AND INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY (SHRI TAPAN SIKDAR): (a) There is one Sub Foreign Post Office at Ahmedabad.

(b) 31,314 parcels were received in the Foreign Post Office in Ahmedabad during the last two years;

(c) to (e) Incoming foreign parcels dispatched as per the prescribed procedure and regulations are delivered to their addresses by the delivery post office concerned. Only in exceptional cases, addresses are required to attend the Sub Foreign Post Office to furnish requisite information for customs clearance. Hence, there is no plan to open more Foreign Post Offices in the State of Gujarat.

Stoppage of storage at Jiribam (Manipur)

799. SHRI W. ANGOU SINGH: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the tenders of the carriage contractor for rice to the Jiribam storage has been cancelled for 2000-2001 after a long pendency;

(b) if so, the reasons therefor;

(c) whether Government have stopped to stock rice at Jiribam, from where distribution to nearby district of Manipur is made; and

(d) if so, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) and (b) The tenders received for the carriage contract for 2000-2001 ex-Jiribam Railhead to Food Storage Depot, Imphal, were cancelled as the rates were on the higher side.

(c) and (d) The monthly requirement of Jiribam sub-division is only 54 MTs (approx.) of rice and 18 MTs (approx.) sugar. This is being issued from Silchar, about 45 km from Jiribam.

Acceptance of parboiled rice by FCIN in A.P.

800. SHRI K. KALAVENKATA RAO: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government have directed the Food Corporation of India to accept 7.5 lakh tonne parboiled rice in Andhra Pradesh; and

(b) if so, the progress made in this regard during the Kharif season 2001-2002?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As on 2.3.2002, a quantity of 4.51 lakh MTs of Boiled rice has been procured by FCI in Andhra Pradesh.

New Foodgrains Policy

801. SHRI P. PRABHAKAR REDDY: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that Government have decided to announce shortly a New Foodgrains Policy;

(b) if so, the details thereof and by when the new policy would be put in place;

(c) whether it is also a fact that it is proposed to dismantle the present grain procurement system;

(d) if so, whether the viewpoints of the various State Governments have been sought in the matter; and

(e) the steps proposed to be taken to safeguard interest of the farmers?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION (SHRI ASHOK PRADHAN): (a) A High Level Committee (HLC) under the Chairmanship of Prof. Abhijit Sen, former Chairman, CACP has been constituted to formulate a long term grain policy for the country. The HLC is expected to submit its final report in March 2002.

(b) to (e) The new policy will be finalized after the HLC's final report is examined by the Ministry. At present there is no concrete proposal to dismantle the existing system.

Amendment in Essential Commodities Act

802. SHRI R.P. GOENKA: Will the Minister of CONSUMER AFFAIRS, FOOD AND PUBLIC DISTRIBUTION be pleased to state:

(a) whether there is a proposal to amend the Essentieal Commodities Act